

Identifying Exceptionalities in the General Education Classroom



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Overview



- × Inclusion
- × IDEA
- × Disabilities
- × Identification
- × IEP
- × Accommodations
- × Activity
- × Resources

What is Inclusion?



- ✗ 80% of all general education classrooms have at least 1 student with a disability
- ✗ Students with disabilities/exceptionality being in a general education classroom (i.e. where they would be if they didn't have a disability)
- ✗ General education teacher is the student's main teacher, with supports coming to the student, not the other way around
- ✗ All activities are accessible to ALL students
- ✗ Accommodations are made based on individual student needs

What is IDEA?



- ✗ Stands for Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ✗ Originally passed in 1975 under the name Education for All Handicapped Children's Act
- ✗ Reauthorized most recently in 2004
- ✗ It's the nation's special education law, covering 13 disabilities

IDEA



- ✗ Ensures services to children with disabilities throughout America
- ✗ Ensures access to free and appropriate public education (FAPE)
- ✗ Teach children in the least restrictive environment possible i.e. general education classroom whenever possible
- ✗ Standardized rules for how states and public agencies provide intervention, special education and related services
- ✗ More than 6 million children receive some type of support under IDEA

The 13 Disabilities Under IDEA



1. Autism spectrum disorder
2. Deaf-blindness
3. Deafness
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Hearing impairment
6. Intellectual disability
7. Multiple disabilities
8. Orthopedic impairment
9. Other health impairment
10. Specific learning disabilities
11. Speech or language impairment
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Visual impairment

* Developmental delay is also included, but only refers to children from birth to age 9

Most Common Exceptionalities in Schools



1. Specific learning disability
2. Speech or language impairment
3. Other health impairment
4. Intellectual disability
5. Emotional disturbance
6. Autism spectrum disorder

Specific Learning Disability



- ✗ A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes
- ✗ May manifest itself as a difficulty to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or complete mathematical calculations
- ✗ Includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia
- ✗ The most common SLD is a reading disability
 - ✗ 3 forms of developmental reading disabilities: phonological deficit, processing speed/orthographic processing deficit, and comprehension deficit

Specific Learning Disability (cont.)



✗ Reading disability:

- ✗ **Phonological deficit**- trouble learning sound-symbol correspondence, sounding out words, and spelling
- ✗ **Processing speed/orthographic processing deficit**- accurate but slow in word recognition and text reading; weaknesses with speed of word recognition and automatic recall of word spellings
- ✗ **Comprehension deficit**- can decode words but have trouble understanding what they are reading; often due to social-linguistic disabilities, vocabulary weaknesses, and difficulties with abstract reasoning and logical thinking
- ✗ Students often have a combination of the above

Speech or Language Impairment



- ✗ Communication such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance
 - ✗ It is considered a delay when the student is noticeably behind his or her peers in the acquisition of speech and/or language skills
 - ✗ Nonverbal vs. verbal IQ
- ✗ Easier to learn language and communication skills before the age of 5; early intervention is key

Speech and Language Impairment (cont.)



- ✗ After an SLI is identified, the SLP in the school can provide individualized therapy for the student
- ✗ Work closely with teacher to create goals
- ✗ Assistive technology could be very helpful with students with a SLI

Other Health Impairment



- ✗ Limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to educational environment
- ✗ Must adversely affect a child's educational performance
- ✗ Most common disorder in this category?

Intellectual Disability



- × IQ 2 standard deviations below the mean (i.e. below 70)
- × Most common developmental disability
- × Identified before age 18
- × Identified by looking at 2 main things:
 - × The ability of a person's brain to learn, think, solve problems and make sense of the world (IQ or intellectual functioning)
 - × Whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior), such as getting dressed, going to the bathroom, etc.

Emotional Disturbance



- ✗ A condition with one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and adversely affects a child's education performance:
 - ✧ Inability to learn that is not caused by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
 - ✧ Inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
 - ✧ Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
 - ✧ A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
 - ✧ A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

Autism Spectrum Disorder



- ✗ Developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3
- ✗ Must adversely affect a child's performance in education
- ✗ Can anyone name other characteristics of autism?

“Adversely Affects”



- ✗ The term “adversely affects” in regards to a student’s education performance related to their disability does not mean “failing”
- ✗ Student does not have to be failing or retained in order to meet the criteria of a disability under IDEA
- ✗ Struggling and in need of extra support

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



- ✗ IDEA strongly prefers that students with disabilities are taught with their peers without disabilities
- ✗ A child in a special education classroom only occurs if the child cannot be educated effectively in the general education environment, even with the use of supplementary aids and services

How Can You Identify a Student With a Disability or Exceptionality?



- ✗ Get background information
- ✗ Progress monitor/RtI
- ✗ Data collection
- ✗ Evaluation (MTSS or Parent request)
- ✗ Develop an IEP

Response to Intervention: A Brief Overview



- ✗ RTI is a multi-tier approach to identification of students with learning and behavior needs
- ✗ Tier 1: High-quality classroom instruction, screening, and group interventions
 - ✧ Screened through FSA testing, IOWA testing, iReady program, DIBELS, and other curriculum-based measurement
 - ✧ This universal screening identifies those “at-risk”
- ✗ Tier 2: Targeted interventions
 - ✧ Small-group setting
- ✗ Tier 3: Intensive Interventions
 - ✧ One-on-one instruction

Comprehensive Evaluation



- ✗ If a child has been through all tiers and has shown little or no progress, an evaluation may be requested
- ✗ Generally, the school psychologist completes an evaluation based on the difficulties the child is displaying
 - ✦ Evaluations include cognitive tests (IQ to determine eligibility of an intellectual disability), academic achievement (determines learning disability), or social-and-emotional evaluation (includes ASD, EBD, and ED)
- ✗ An evaluation may also be requested in any tier by the parent

What is an IEP?



- ✗ Individualized Education Plan or Program
- ✗ In order to receive special education services, the student must have an IEP
- ✗ Discusses the child's learning needs, the services that will be provided, and how progress will be measured
- ✗ Video: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/understanding-individualized-education-programs>

Diagnosis



- ✗ No one at the school makes a medical diagnosis
- ✗ Only a doctor can make a medical diagnosis
- ✗ Evaluations and IEPs simply state that under IDEA, the student meets the requirements for services because of his or her performance in RTI and the evaluation

Types of Accommodations/Services



- × Time on tests
- × How the test is taken
- × ACCESS points
- × Speech language pathologist
- × Occupational therapy
- × Seating arrangements
- × Placement in a special education class
- × Counseling
- × Behavior implementation plan

The “Other” Exceptionality



- × Gifted or talented students
- × Often overlooked because they are generally “successful” in class
- × Identifying giftedness can be a difficult task because although certain characteristics can be generalized within this population, some gifted individuals may not possess the same characteristics as other gifted individuals or exhibit them in the same way. (Clark, 2013)

Concepts of Giftedness

Classroom Behaviors of Gifted Students



- ✗ A child may show giftedness through ***leadership*** ability:
 - ✗ Organize and lead group activities and sometimes take over
 - ✗ Enjoy decision making and stay with that decision
 - ✗ Enjoy taking risks
 - ✗ Synthesize ideas and information from a lot of different sources
 - ✗ Seems cocky, self-assured

Concepts of Giftedness

Classroom Behaviors of Gifted Students



✗ A child may show giftedness through ***cognitive*** ability:

- ✗ Asks a lot of questions
- ✗ Shows a lot of interest in his or her progress
- ✗ Sticks to a subject long after the class has gone on to other things OR completes only part of an assignment and then takes off in a new direction
- ✗ Seems restless or bored
- ✗ Likes solving puzzles and problems
- ✗ Talks a lot
- ✗ Understand and likes metaphors and abstract ideas

Concepts of Giftedness

Classroom Behaviors of Gifted Students



✗ A child may show giftedness through ***performing arts*** ability:

- ✗ Seems to pick up skills in the arts without instruction-music, dance, drama, painting, etc.
- ✗ Sees minute detail in products or performances
- ✗ Invents new techniques and/or experiment
- ✗ Has high sensory sensitivity

(From Growing Up Gifted, 8th Edition by Barbara Clark, 2013)

Gifted Eligibility Criteria



✗ Plan A:

- ✗ Intelligence quotient of two standard deviations or more above the mean on an individually administered standardized IQ test
- ✗ have most characteristics of “gifted” according to a standard scale or checklist
- ✗ A need for a special program (bored in class etc)

✗ Plan B: Provides greater flexibility in identifying students who are members of an underrepresented group

- ✗ Limited English Proficient (LEP) students and students from low socioeconomic status (SES) families
- ✗ Measured by the student’s eligibility for the government-subsidized free and reduced lunch program.

Activity



- ✗ Get in groups
- ✗ Read the scenarios
- ✗ Determine what exceptionality the student displays out of the following:
 - ✧ Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - ✧ Emotional Disturbance
 - ✧ Intellectual Disability
 - ✧ Specific learning disability
 - ✧ Speech or Language Impairment
 - ✧ Gifted

Resources



✗ For learning disabilities:

- ✦ Florida Center for Reading Research- <http://www.fcrr.org/>
- ✦ Reading Rockets- <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/accommodations-students-ld>

✗ For OHI (ADHD):

- ✦ Understood- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/instructional-strategies/at-a-glance-classroom-accommodations-for-adhd>

✗ For behavior:

- ✦ Class Dojo- <https://www.classdojo.com/>
- ✦ Teacher Vision- <https://www.teachervision.com/teaching-strategies/behavior-management>

✗ Other helpful resources:

- ✦ Education Week- <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>
- ✦ The IRIS Center- <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/> (resources about evidence-based practices for use in preservice preparation and professional development programs)

Questions?



THANK YOU!!